

## New York Tribune

First to Last—the Truth: News—Editorials—Advertisements.

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Mr. Hobson really wants to reform us he had better make sure that he is attacking the problem in the right way.

## Safety Last.

The Triangle fire, the Binghamton fire and the recent Williamsburg factory fire, with their appalling death lists, carry no lessons. Or else human greed, on the one hand, and the sheer necessity for work at any hazard to keep mouths filled, on the other, are superior to all statutes. One conclusion or the other is inevitable. The light of a report just made by Dr. George M. Price to the joint board of sanitary control of the clothing industries, dealing with an inspection of 928 buildings in which clothing workers are employed. This inspection, made last October, showed that thirty-eight buildings were perfectly safe—that is, they complied with all the requirements of the laws as they now stand. In all the others numerous violations were found, ranging from insufficient stairways and lack of fire escapes to general smoking by employees and absence of fire drills.

In the buildings inspected more than 1,000,000 persons are employed daily; that is, more than 1,000,000 persons daily put themselves into peril to earn their bread. They have no choice. It is an occupational peril not within the purview of the workmen's compensation law, but none the less present. The state undertakes to eliminate it and does not. The factory owners violate the laws and get away with it. The public seethes with sympathy and indignation for a few days following the newest revelation of this awful condition, particularly if that revelation take the form of another disaster with loss of life, and then forgets it.

Is the law impotent before greed? Or is the statute book merely a concession to form, a farce, an empty shell? Absolute safety, of course, cannot be guaranteed by statute, but compliance with the laws enacted after the Triangle fire would have saved most, if not all, of the lives lost in the two subsequent disasters. Who is to blame—the factory operators, who must work where they can or starve; the factory owners, who have their capital invested and must obtain a profit on it; the officials, who are supposed to enforce the laws, and fail; the general public, which is supposed to stand behind all laws and their enforcement? It is a vicious circle on which Death loops the loop. Squaring the circle seems easy by comparison with solving this problem in social justice.

## Influenza Again Prevalent.

There is small comfort in the official assurance that influenza is not more common than usual hereabouts. It means only that no marked increase has been noted by the Department of Health, a circumstance by no means irreconcilable with extraordinary prevalence. The Health Commissioner puts the case clearly in saying that "at present our records show no abnormal increase of the grip." It is quite possible, however, that physicians in private practice might have a different story to tell, for if this year's variety were of a relatively mild character they would be the first to notice an increase in the number of cases.

Some of the most widespread outbreaks have had little apparent effect on the mortality lists, for the virulence of influenza varies to a remarkable degree in different years. But it is not easy to determine the precise mortality in any year. Influenza is one of those diseases that kill at long range, and it is safe to say that a great many deaths entered under other heads are in a true sense attributable to it. The seeming triviality of the illness in many cases is one of its dangers, and for this reason no case of grip should be regarded as insignificant.

At present there is not the least occasion for alarm, but it is well to take reasonable precautions. There is no doubt about the prevalence of influenza in the Middle West, in Pennsylvania and in some parts of New Jersey. If former experience counts for anything, New York is not likely to escape whole, even if it has escaped hitherto. Hence Dr. Emerson's warning against unnecessary exposure to infection ought to be duly heeded by all.

## Hardships of German Prisoners.

One of the guards in a military prisoners' camp in England is quoted in a recent dispatch as saying: "The only difference between us and the prisoners here is that we have the keys." In a second dispatch purporting to describe conditions in another camp it is intimated that the worst hardship the Germans have to endure is "lager beer brewed in Scotland."

Obviously these reports have been censored or inspired by the British government. It is possible, no doubt, that in some of the camps the prisoners suffer no serious deprivations, just as in Germany there are known to be camps where English prisoners are not controlled by police dogs or robbed of their overcoats by the officers in charge. Perhaps the best camps in England were selected for inspection, by way of establishing a contrast to the camp at Wittenberg as described by our ambassador in Berlin. It is quite certain, in any case, that at one camp in England the Germans have been treated with extraordinary harshness.

The facts were made public recently, in spite of the censor, when a correspondent wrote to the papers protesting against the use to which his pheasants had been put at Liberty Hall. "Two of the inmates of Liberty Hall," he wrote, "have been supplied with game licenses, and, taking advantage of a large field of cover planted next to the wood, they have steadily killed and wounded the pheasants fed out of the wood into the roots from October 1."

In a second letter he complains that "the shooting has been continual, and five men were seen one day in line driving my partridges into the Liberty potato fields to help the day's sport."

The matter was ultimately brought up in the House of Commons, and though it

is impossible to say exactly what action was taken there is good reason to believe that the unfortunate German prisoners were deprived of their liceps. At any rate, the author of the original complaint himself admits that "the shooting has been stopped."

No one apparently has attempted to find out by what process of law the Germans were robbed of their sport. It is known, indeed, that English officers on service abroad are not allowed to have shotguns in their possession, but in taking the guns away from Germans in England the authorities seem to have been governed by a spirit of downright tyranny and oppression.

## An Apple a Day.

"Eat an apple a day," advises Commissioner Dillon of the State Department of Foods and Markets. He doesn't give his opinion whether this will keep the doctor away, but he does declare that if all persons in New York and its environs follow his advice they will consume 7,200,000 items of wholesome, nutritious fruit daily, and a great wastage which now seems likely to overtake the community next spring will be averted. There are now in storage, he says, according to government reports, 1,000,000 barrels of apples more than the total holdings a year ago this time, and the apples, being larger and juicier than usual because of the rainy summer, will not keep so well.

Mr. Dillon says that by his system of apple auctions he standardized prices this summer and greatly helped the growers, and incidentally those consumers who brought fruit at his auctions. It is quite possible that he did help the growers, while reducing prices somewhat to retail dealers. The sad fact remains that the price made by retailers to the ordinary family seems to be no different from the rate of other years. If retailers got lower prices through his system they must have been too few to affect the ordinary prices for apples bought from the fruit store or the corner grocery, or else the retailers must be taking advantage of the lower prices to make larger profits.

New York State apples are splendid fruit—the best specimens are not excelled by any apples in the world, if they are equalled. They are, unfortunately, not as popular as they ought to be, because a decent apple from a fruit stand costs in most instances as much as an orange from Florida or California, and few families can buy apples, either from a dealer or through these auctions, by the barrel.

"Eat an apple a day" will be a more popular slogan when this reported overstocking brings the hoarded fruit out of the storehouses and places it within the reach of consumers at lower prices.

That "ring-tailed squealer" which has involved Representative Fitzgerald in a lawsuit is just a monkey, but if it doesn't implant its name in the vocabulary of political campaigns its life will have been in vain.

At least the proposed new constitution was not without honor. It heaped up against itself the biggest majority ever recorded in an election in this state.

The "German Humanity League" wants the Kaiser dethroned from "the throne he has fouled." Is this another exhibition of Kultur?

The B. R. T.'s increase of wages to employees amounting to \$250,000 in the year is the best kind of a Christmas present.

## Cuba's National Coinage.

Up to this time Cuba has had no coins of its own, a rather remarkable condition of affairs for a country that has maintained a separate political existence for sixteen years. The change from the old system to the use of the new money of the republic has been effected without causing a ripple on the surface of business, and good results are already being noted. Formerly Spanish, French United States and small quantities of other moneys circulated indiscriminately. On nearly every prominent corner in Cuban cities, and especially in Havana, in news, cigar and lottery ticket stands were money changers who did a thriving business out of the wide confusion of values. Many abuses and inconveniences arose from this condition of affairs. Banks and business houses had to keep their accounts in three moneys: Spanish, French and American, and the values of the various coins were constant causes of misunderstandings and a detriment to commerce generally.

The new national coinage, of which there will be more than \$12,000,000 in circulation by January 1, consists of gold, silver and nickel coins. They are on an absolute parity with the money of the United States. The gold coins are \$20, \$10 and \$5 pieces, and the silver coins are the "peso" of 100 centavos (cents), the "cuarenta," or 40-centavo piece; the "veinte," or 20-centavo, and the silver 10-centavo piece. There are also nickel 5-centavo, 2-centavo and 1-centavo coins. This national currency is rapidly taking the place of foreign coins.

Perhaps this new coinage will have a subtle effect in promoting Cuban patriotism.

## The Dog's Day in War.

The dog is having his day in the war. Aye, and before war, Aurelian Scholl, of ambiguous name but French sympathies, thus described the German maneuvers after dogs "came in": "Before General Waldersee there passed in review the Second Bulding Brigade, the First Regiment of Box-wolves and the Second Regiment of Imperial Poodles. Dogs over seven years enter the Landwehr, all dogs who have their tails in the shape of a trumpet are enrolled in the band." Now France has classified her own war dogs in three groups: patrol dogs, linking dogs and ambulance dogs.

Some ambulance dogs are famous. To mention only three: There is Loulou, the gift of the poet Edmond Rostand to the French army; Stop, of the Fifteenth Army Corps, who has saved scores of lives, and Flora, of the Twelfth Alpine Chasseurs, who did linking work for four days, running under a rain of shell without receiving a wound.

Dogs have not yet been taken in array orders. When they are, there is one dog that will not be forgotten—Maxipin, who, though wounded by shrapnel, kept on his way in a far-off detachment and arrived breathless and panting at his destination, only to die as the dispatch he carried was taken from his neck. "That dog deserved the Legion of Honor," say the soldiers.

## OPPOSITION ALWAYS CRITICAL

## Britain's Coalition Government Has Not Muzzled the Press.

To the Editor of The Tribune.  
Sir: I hope that all Americans who study our conduct with regard to the war are fully alive to the fact that even under a coalition government party feeling is still particularly rife in the editorial sanctum. It is well to understand when reading the English war news that there is always a member of the government in whom the journalist has little trust and whom he believes it incumbent upon him to damn with faint praise. This applies to all English newspapers, no matter what may be their enmity or political faith.

Out of the journalistic sphere Englishmen know that the initial blunders and mistakes which attended England's entry into the war—and which no nation whose ideal was peace could have altogether escaped—have now been rectified, and triumphs of energy and organization have succeeded them. But the English press won't let it go at that. Some minister, of the opposite party, must be shown his weakness. This is what is known, in England at any rate, and even in war time, as freedom of speech. But the English pressman falls in humor by associating such freedom with anonymous contributions. If the sermon in these paragraphs which constitutes the editorial view was always signed there would be no cause for complaint. Light would then be given by the writer's qualifications. But the English newspaper editor sticks to the unsigned "leader," even in condemning the timidity of his political opponents.

Neutrals should mark that in this matter the English press censor does not intervene. He can stop the percolation of news beneficial to the enemy, but he cannot remove all that obstructs their view of intelligent effort on the part of those unconnected with the Fourth Estate.

C. KING.  
Chapel Hill, Cornwall, Eng., Dec. 8, 1915.

## Antepenultimatum—and Worse.

To the Editor of The Tribune.  
Sir: Yesterday's Tribune has the following headline: "Wilson Seeks Now to Avoid an Ultimatum." It goes on to say: "Although it was openly admitted at the State Department today that the Austrian reply was unsatisfactory in every particular, and in spite of repeated declarations by officials before its receipt that the United States would not make the Ancona a subject of debate, it has been decided to send another note, which, so far as form is concerned, will be no stronger than the first."

I cannot refrain from asking, who in this wide country or wider world expected anything else? I honestly—no joking, no exaggeration—should have been surprised had any other course been adopted.

Years ago, in a list of "longest words," I found this: "Unpropentepenultimaticability." (I confess that I have never seen it elsewhere.) Do you not think that if your clever cartoonist had known that word he would have used "propentepenultimatum" instead of anything implying such quick action as a mere "antepenultimatum"? And do you not wish that the real "unpropentepenultimaticability" of the case would dawn upon the professional brain of our Chief Executive?

One more thought, if I may venture it: Does not the sending home of Teutonic diplomats appear to you to resemble in its facility the efforts of anarchists to abolish monarchies by regicide? The individual is eliminated, but the system goes right on, practically unaffected.

CHARLOTTE DOBBIN.  
New York, Dec. 10, 1915.

## Wireless Amateurs a Help.

To the Editor of The Tribune.  
Sir: While reading your paper to-day I noticed an article headed "Peril to Hundreis in Toy Wireless," in which you state that the Department of Water, Gas and Electricity is going to proceed against the young Marconis under the new electric code, which requires that all persons making electrical installations be licensed.

Under the laws of the United States (an act approved August 13, 1912, entitled "An Act to Regulate Radio Communication") any person is entitled to have a wireless station without a license unless he has apparatus powerful enough to send out of the state in which he resides. This being the case I fail to see what grounds the Department of Water, Gas and Electricity has for action against the amateurs. Your article further states that as aerial on the roof of an apartment house endangers the lives of all the persons in the building. As a matter of fact, an aerial properly grounded is a protection against lightning storms.

The wireless amateurs of the United States have been of great service to the government. Take, for instance, the case of messages that were being sent out from Sayville in direct violation of our neutrality. It was an amateur who discovered and recorded them. (How you will see your mistake in condemning all amateurs because of the comparatively few cases where neglect has resulted disastrously.)

JOHN FARNAN.  
Brooklyn, Dec. 18, 1915.

## Not Yet at the Expert Stage.

To the Editor of The Tribune.  
Sir: The answer to Mr. Gouverneur Morris's letter on "Amateur Preparedness" is obvious. When we have decided whether or not we want a large increase in our armament we shall ask our army experts and generals how the increase is to be made. At present the questions at issue are larger matters of national policy, in which every citizen can and ought to be interested. What sort of foreign policy do we wish to pursue? Does America in her advantageous geographical position need as much defense as do exposed European nations? Does she need conscription and do the citizens wish to commit themselves to this Prussian policy?

Is the problem of armament exclusively national or would it be wise to wait until the results of the European struggle are more clearly apparent? And, some better way to prevent war by devised than the method of piling up armament, which has proved in the past not only futile but disastrous? Will it not be possible after the war to establish some stronger sort of international organization? Surely the old state of affairs cannot go on without some change.

These are questions not for generals and civil engineers, but for all men. When the future of humanity is involved we do not need to put our faith in army experts alone.

H. F. WHICHER.  
Amherst, Mass., Dec. 17, 1915.

## Wait and See.

To the Editor of The Tribune.  
Sir: I note your news item warning readers of the approaching gasoline famine, and, of course, higher prices.

When the Standard Oil Company commenced its campaign of advertising recently you knew what was coming.

The "Gasolugue" is a series of advertisements in which the Standard Oil Company is making a good deal toward checking off advice critics of Standard Oil Company methods by the New York press.

MOTORIST.  
New York, Dec. 20, 1915.

## POLITICS NOT AT FAULT

## England Not Tottling to Fall Because of Party Differences.

To the Editor of The Tribune.  
Sir: I have a friend who receives through his brother frequent issues of your paper. He comes in for a chat to me and passes on the literature. I should like to tell you how much we appreciate the editorials and general tone of your paper. For ability and knowledge your leader writing, so far as I have seen the paper, displays qualities which are in excess of most of our writers engaged on similar work on this side. Certainly, the judicial tone is all we could desire.

Two issues just put into my hands are those of October 23 and November 5. Both contain letters by a man who calls himself Britannicus. If he had adopted any other name you would not have heard from me, but he poses in this way as possessing special knowledge which certainly does not appear in his articles; further, it is apparent by words such as "gotten," which no Britisher would use, that wherever he learned to write English it was not in England.

May I run through these letters with you? "The Plague of Party Politics." The inference that England is tottering to her fall because of party politics is wrong all the time. In the first place, England is quite well, thank you. In the second, all politicians (outside of a few extremists who do not count here) are prepared to recognize that their opponents while differing from them in details are animated by one desire only, the good of